

March 4, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor  
New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader  
New York State Senate  
LOB 907  
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker  
New York State Assembly  
LOB 932  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Heastie,

As leaders who represent institutions of faith that advocate for communities in every corner of New York City, we understand the fundamental importance of public education. Our children need quality public schools - schools where they can learn, grow and thrive. Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, the City's public schools are the strongest they have ever been, and students in every neighborhood are being supported on their path to success. That is why we urge you to pass an at least three year or more extension of mayoral control of the New York City school system to continue this momentum.

In fall 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Equity and Excellence for All, a set of new initiatives with ambitious goals for New York City schools. These initiatives address our students' academic, social, and emotional needs from the first book they successfully read by themselves until their high school diploma and college acceptance letter are in hand.

Our kids are responding to these innovative solutions. Graduation rates have never been higher, with significant increases among Hispanic, Black and Asian students. Dropout rates are at historic lows. More students than ever are taking and passing Advanced Placement exams. On state exams, New York City students have closed the gap with their New York State peers in math and outperformed students across the state in English Language Arts three years in a row.

This Mayor and Chancellor have also made clear that they are closely listening to the needs of families and are committed to empowering parents to move school communities forward. From the Chancellor's listening tour when he first arrived in New York, to hiring a new Deputy Chancellor for community empowerment and the Mayor and Chancellor's ongoing five-borough parent leader forums, it's clear that the DOE is taking the concerns of our school communities seriously and putting their ideas into action.

These improvements would not be possible without sustained leadership and the ability to marshal resources and make the tough decisions. Our children can't afford to return to the damaged system of past. We implore you to pass a multi-year extension of mayoral control of New York City schools and let our schools, our communities and our city continue to move forward.

Sincerely,

Rev. James Osei-Kofi, Bethesda Healing Center  
Pastor James Richmond, Northeastern Conference SDA  
Rev. Dale Smith, Central Family Life Center  
Imam Souleimane Konate, Council of African Imams and Masjid AQSA Mosque  
Imam Ahmed Aliz Uzir, Global Community Welfare Inc and Iqra Masjid  
Community & Tradition  
Evelyn Castellano-Rodriguez, Chaplain, United Chaplains State of New York  
Dr. Edward Owusu, Global School Of Missions (GSOM)  
Overseer Alonzo Jordan, Gods Open House For Everyone  
Rev. Marian Buckman, Hollis Congregational Church  
Pastor Doris Johnson, Holy Ghost Upper Bronx of Faith Tabernacle  
Director Muhammad T Rahman, Islamic Circle of North America  
Monjur Choudhury, Jamica Muslim Center  
Rev. Sheryl Prehow, Led Of the Lord Ministries  
Patrick Thompson, New City Church  
Pastor Orlando Findlayter, New Hope Christian Fellowship  
Pastor Danilo Archbold, New Jerusalem Cathedral C.O.G.I.C  
President Mir Masum Ali, NY Muslims United for Civic Engagement  
Chaplain Dorrett Warren, NY State Chaplin Taskfoce  
Rev. Dr. Flora Bridges, Rendall Memorial Presbyterian Church  
Pastor Regina Williams, Sacred Heart Ministries  
Rev. Dr. Martha Rollins Overall, St. Ann's Church of Morrisania  
Linda Watson-Lorde, St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. Michael Strong, Strong Families Deliverance Ministries Inc  
Pastor Gwen Dingle, The Pentecostal House of Prayer  
Executive Direct Zac Martin, Trellis  
President and Founder Assetou Sy Traore, USA Mali Charitable Association of NYC  
Chaplain Tara Ragbir, Presbytery of New York  
Rev. Bernice Coaxum, Keys of the Kingdom Pentecostal Holiness Church  
Miriam El-Amin, Samaritan Rescue International  
Dr. Alvin Ponder, National Action Network-Bronx  
Imam Mohammed Ayub, Yankasa Association of USA Inc.  
Terrence Brummell, Brooklyn Fatherhood Partnership  
Evangelist Addie Marrow, Church Of God In Christ  
Lillian Hopkins, Crossover Baptist Church Community Outreach Help Center  
Pastor Joseph Simpson, United Christian Assembly Church  
Mazeda A. Uddin, South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship, and Training (SAFEST)  
Laura Limuli, Friends of (Rikers) Island Academy & Darfur People's Assn. of NY  
Rev. Canon Crowns Adepeko, Anglican Church of the Epiphany  
Amany Abouelkhir, Deaf Muslim Association Outreach  
Barbara Biggs Glover, Brooklyn Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc